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the application of the phonetic system of the American Dialect Society (A. D. S.) to Pennsylvania German (P. G.)?

The A. D. S. symbols can not be exactly defined in the terminology of Visible Speech except for individuals or for particular localities where persons may be found who have had the necessary training in phonetics. Exact definitions, which are very desirable, will fix dialect variation better than the present "practical though necessarily imperfect" A. D. S. symbols can do, and when definition is possible the greater the accuracy the better. Mr. GRANDGENT's paper read at the last meeting of the Modern Language Association shows the kind of study needed and also some of the difficulties in the way of exact definition.

In the table on p. 119 (cols. 237-238) should not "mid-mixed-wide" be "low-front-wide"? The A.D.S. *æ* (not *ae*), representing the sound of *a* in *hat*, *mad*, could hardly be call "mid-mixed-wide." The A. D. S. *ou* was proposed for the diphthonged sound common in *so*, *no*, *dough*, etc., as more convenient to write and print than *ô*. If necessary it can be written *ôu* to distinguish it from a diphthong *ou* the first part of which is *o* in *not*. This latter diphthong is the one meant by *ou* in the table, p. 120. On the same page, for *t+s* and *k+s*, read *ts* and *ks*, and instead of *z* in *dz* the A. D. S. sign is a sort of tailed *z*, resembling a figure 3.

I do not suppose that Dr. LEARNED's intention was to define the A. D. S. symbols, but only to show that they could be used—with some additional signs which will be provided as occasion calls for them—to write a non-English dialect, an application of the system which is of interest and illustrates what may be done in the future.

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#### "EARLY ENGLISH."

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—Permit me to reply to Professor Cook's inquiry in No. 5, (vol. v, p. 155) of your journal, that in the catalogue of this University the term "Early English" is used to denote Old English (Anglo-Saxon) and Middle English as far as CHAUCER inclusive, say 1400. It is very true that there is no agreement

as to the terminology of the periods of English, and I despair of ever seeing a consistent terminology employed. The term "Middle English" seems almost as variously used as "Early English," and even here, while some place CHAUCER as Late Middle English, others assign him to Early Modern English. Dr. MURRAY's arrangement by centuries is, perhaps, as good as any other, although it multiplies periods unnecessarily.

If we could agree to close the Old English, or Anglo-Saxon, period at 1150, the Middle English at 1400, and call the language since 1400 Modern English, we might at least approach uniformity. If more sub-divisions were desired, Early Middle English might denote 1150 to 1300, and Late Middle English 1300 to 1400; Early Modern English 1400 to 1600, and Late Modern English since 1600, thus discarding "Early English" and the Transition Periods in the terminology. —Respectfully submitted to a vote.

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#### THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SCRIBES OF BEOWULF.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—In your April issue certain statements were made concerning my article in the preceding number on "The Differences between the Scribes of Beowulf." Of these I wish to say a few words.

The question of the origin of the "Beowulf" can hardly be considered as conclusively settled. TEN BRINK uses these words in closing his argument, p. 241: "Man möge von den in diesem Kapitel ausgestellten Untersuchungen halten was man wolle." I did not wish to discuss the new hypothesis, and so, perhaps unwisely, used the language of the old.

Again, the statement that "dialectal differences are systematically arranged in TEN BRINK's work," tends to give the erroneous impression that he has exhausted the differences between the scribes. Such is not the case. He has not given a single list that does not contain forms used by both A and B, although the list on p. 240 contains but few forms used by A. This list, however, closes with "u. s. w." TEN BRINK's lists were

selected, apparently, to substantiate his dialect hypotheses, not to show differences between scribes. Indeed, in the earlier discussion, wherein by the use of *io*, *to*, he seeks to establish that B was more faithful to his text than A, he omits, if I mistake not, the fact that A uses *io* five times, *to* three times. Neither is my list, although containing many more words, exhaustive, as I gathered it incidentally in the course of a more extended investigation. Further, as regards the leveling of *p* to *ð*, it is asserted that this has no significance, and reference is made to §199 ff. of SIEVERS' 'Old English Grammar.' SWEET agrees with SIEVERS. Nevertheless, it may be well to collect further data in view of the fact that it seems to be established, "that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the two sounds of initial *th* were already in existence as they now are, and in the same words" (F. A. BLACKBURN in the *American Journal of Philology*, vol. iii, pp. 46 ff.).

I decline to accept "The Battle of Maldon" as evidence, since WÜLKER in his 'Grundriss' says concerning it (iii, §330), "1726 druckte Hearne das Bruchstück. Bald darauf (1731) ging die Handschrift beim Brande der Cottoniana zu grunde, so dass wir jetzt auf Hearne's Druck aufgewiesen sind." In such a matter as final *p* what confidence can be placed in a copy made in 1721 and, since the MS. was burned five years later, probably never collated with the original?

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#### PASSY'S 'LE FRANÇAIS PARLÉ.'

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—In the March issue (vol. v, p. 93) of your journal you mention PAUL PASSY'S 'Le français parlé' in a way that calls for some remarks. No one is more convinced than I that the best teaching of French pronunciation must be based on phonetic treatment and that PAUL PASSY is perfectly right in his method and principle of notation. But he has taken his ideas of practical pronunciation from the speech that prevails on the Paris boulevards instead of from that of the mass of educated people. You will undoubtedly grant that a teacher of English pronunciation who should

instruct his pupils to pronounce 'ospital and 'air instead of 'hospital and 'hair,' because he has heard this in London, would be egregiously in the wrong. Still, *mutatis mutandis*, that is exactly what PAUL PASSY is guilty of. Then what shall we say of his notation *les=lé*, which is not only contrary to usage, contrary to the prescription of every treatise on pronunciation (including the last grammar of DA COSTA recently published for the schools of the city of Paris), but even classed as something characteristic of the pronunciation of Southern Frenchmen, whose peculiarities cannot be called good French. I am sorry to find fault with the practical part of a book that under different conditions might have rendered an invaluable service.

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#### TEXT-BOOKS FOR PREPARATORY SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—The new program setting forth the requirements in Modern Languages for admission to New England colleges will surely work a greatly needed improvement in the methods of teaching; the brief statement it contains will have all the power of an enactment in that direction.

The subordinate question of text-books for reading has been necessarily curtailed, yet was not left untouched. The framers of the program had many pertinent things to say on the subject. Their ideas, though not expressed for want of room, are too valuable to be lost for those whom it may concern. Here they are in a nut-shell:

Text-books for reading ought to have certain qualities: a.—They should be edited by persons who really know the languages in which the books are written; b.—Interesting, though short introductions relating to the books and the authors of them, are desirable; c.—The notes ought to be very carefully worked out, and be not only (1) explanatory, but also, (2) suggestive in every direction, (3) so framed as to quicken the powers of observation of the student, and (4) conducive to the right interpretation of the thoughts of the author.

This is an addendum to the program which,